

THE À CHOÛ CONFUSION



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Letter People Land was a place
where no one ever sneezed.

Then Miss A came to Letter People Land.

She sneezed *a-choo*, *a-choo* all the time.

Whenever people heard *a-choo*,
they knew it was Miss A.

One day, a strange thing happens.

The antique clock in Letter People Land sneezes.

It sneezes *a-choo*.



Mrs. Apple and Ann hear the clock sneeze.

"Miss A," they say, "why is the antique clock sneezing?"

You are the only one in Letter People Land who sneezes."

"The antique clock asked me if it could sneeze *a-choo*," explains Miss A.

"I agreed.

Now the antique clock sneezes the time every hour."

"A sneezing letter person and a sneezing clock will be fun," laughs Ann.

But the very next day the sneezing clock causes a problem.



It starts when Alyson the Astronaut calls Miss A.
“Miss A,” says Alyson, “this afternoon I want to show the children how people work together. Will you help me with a make-believe space flight?”
“How can I help you?” asks Miss A.
“Pretend to check the instruments in the control tower.
Then sneeze *a-choo* three times,” explains Alyson.
“When I hear three *a-choos*, I will pretend to blast off.”
“Three *a-choos* will be our signal,” says Miss A.



That afternoon Miss A goes to the control tower.
She pretends to check all the instruments.
The children watch.

“People in the control tower must be sure
everything is all right,” explains Miss A.
As Miss A is speaking, Alyson rushes
into the control tower.

“Alyson,” says Miss A, “why didn’t you wait outside
until I sneezed our *a-choo* signal ?”



"Miss A, you confused me," says Alyson.
"Our signal was three *a-choos*.
You sneezed one *a-choo*.
I thought you needed me."
"I did not sneeze," says Miss A.
"But I heard one *a-choo*," insists Alyson,
"and you are the only one in Letter People Land
who sneezes."
"I am not the only one anymore," says Miss A.
"Look, it is one o'clock!
That's why you heard one *a-choo*.
The antique clock was sneezing the time."



The next day the clock causes another problem. It starts when Anton the Acrobat asks Miss A for help. "This afternoon at two-thirty I am going to cover my eyes with a handkerchief and then perform," says Anton.

"I need a signal to warn me if I get too near the edge of the stage," explains Anton.

"One *a-choo* would be a perfect signal. I would know it is you because no one else sneezes." Miss A thinks about the sneezing clock.

"The clock will not sneeze until three o'clock. Anton's act will be finished before the clock sneezes. It won't be a problem," she thinks. But Miss A is wrong.



That afternoon Miss A stands behind the stage curtain.

She watches Anton cover his eyes with a handkerchief.

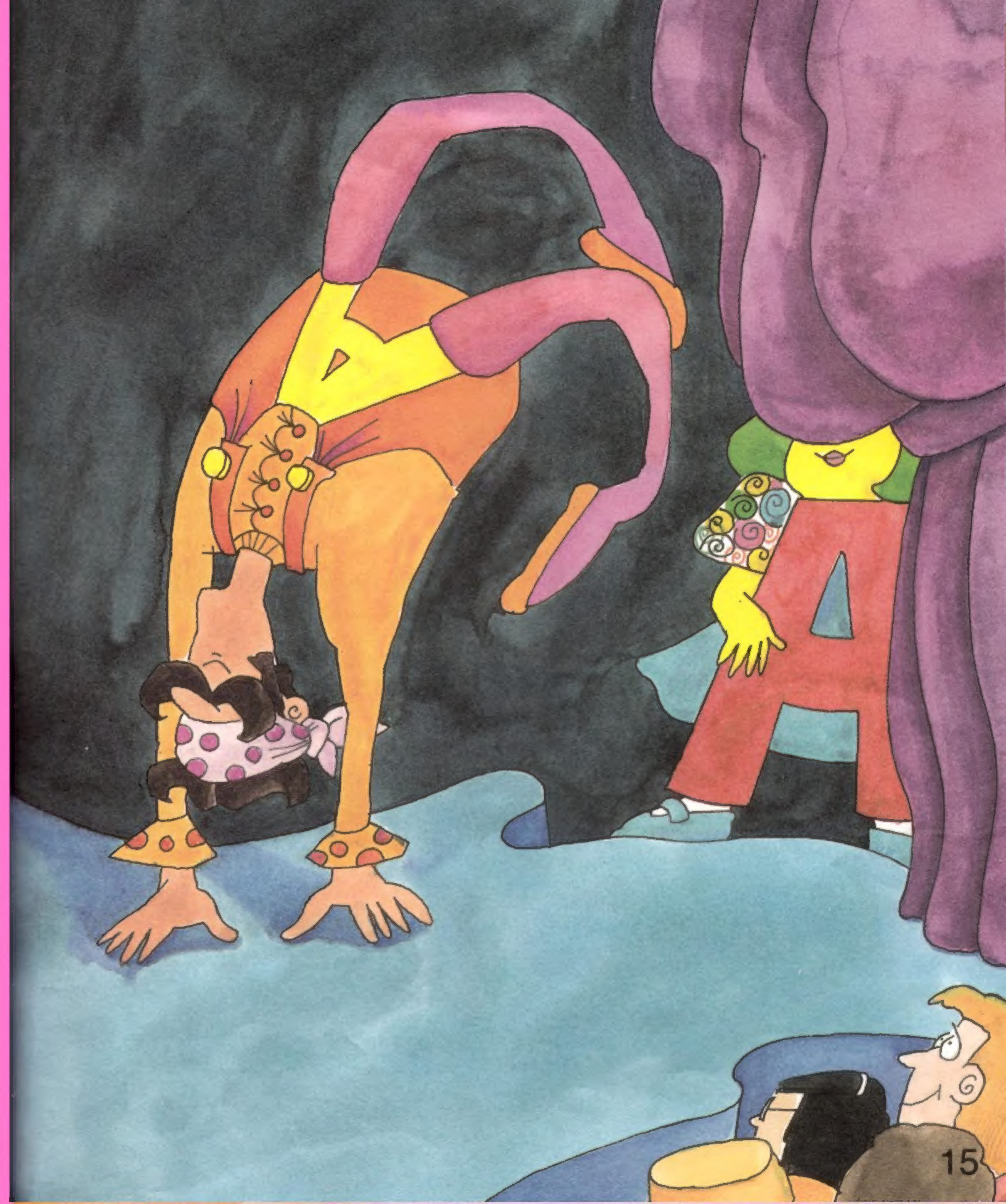
At two-thirty Anton begins his daring acrobatic act. The audience claps and claps.

Miss A watches every move Anton makes.

Anton's act is so good, the audience asks him to do more and more.

Anton performs for a very, very long time.

Suddenly, at the most exciting part of his act, everyone hears, "A-choo! A-choo! A-choo!"



Anton gets frightened.
He stops moving.
“Miss A is supposed to sneeze one *a-choo*
if I am in trouble.
She sneezed three *a-choos*.
I must be in great danger,” Anton thinks.
Carefully, trying not to move his feet,
Anton pulls down the handkerchief.
“I don’t understand,” he says.
“I am not near the edge of the stage.”



"Miss A, why did you sneeze three *a-choos*?"
asks Anton.

"I didn't sneeze any *a-choos*," answers Miss A quietly.

"Look," says Miss A, "it is three o'clock.

Your act was much longer than I thought it would be.

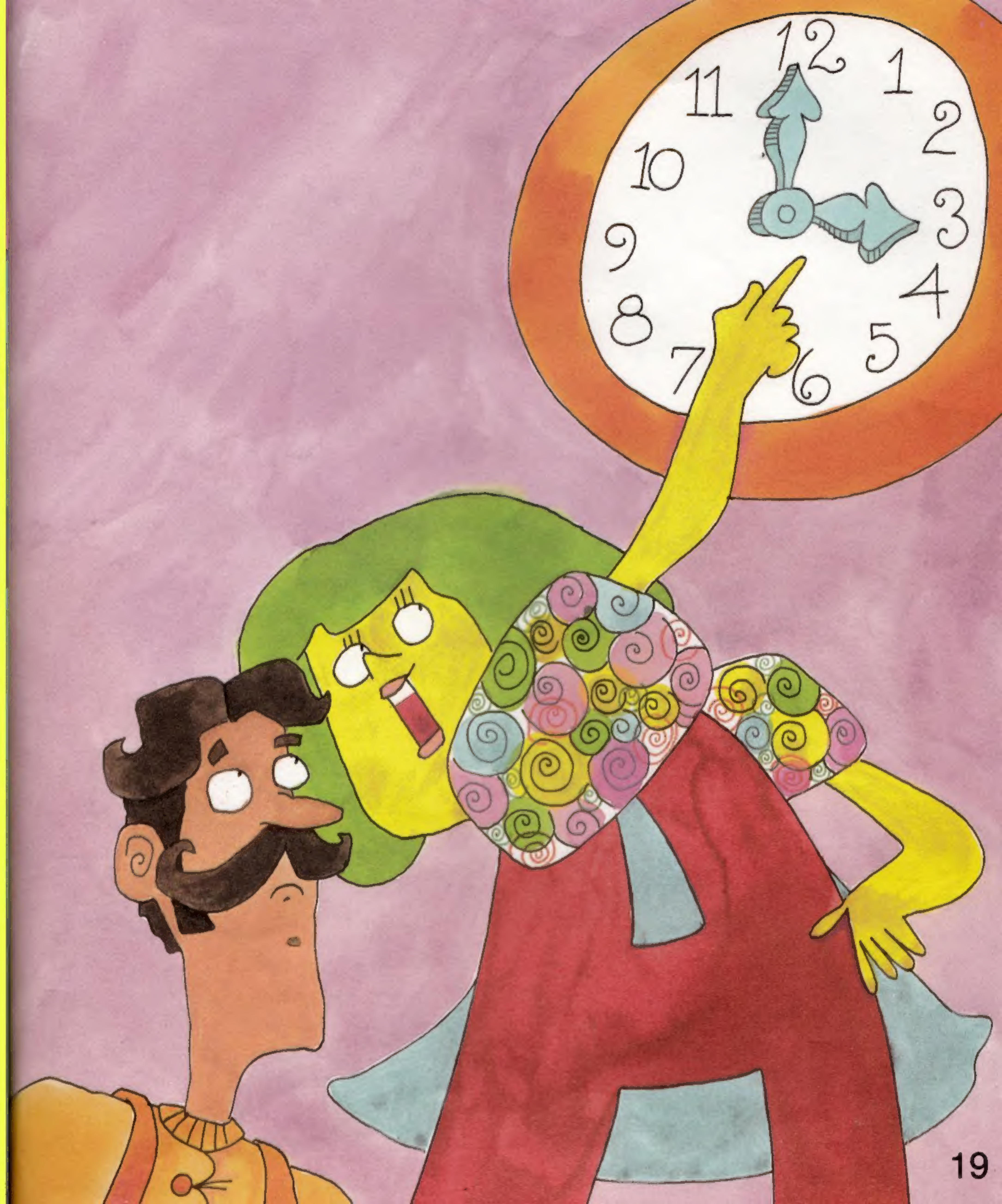
The three *a-choos* you heard were the antique clock
sneezing the time."

"I forgot there is a sneezing clock," says Anton.

"The sneezing clock got me confused.

But I must finish my act."

Miss A thinks about the *a-choo* confusion
as she watches the rest of Anton's act.



That evening there is a sing-along at the school gym.
Miss A arrives late.
She sees everyone seated in a large circle.
The mayor is leading the children in a happy song.
Miss A stands near the back exit door,
waiting until the song is finished.
Suddenly all the lights go out.
It is very, very dark.
“Please stay seated,” says the mayor.
“The lights will be on soon.”
“We don’t want to stay here in the dark,”
say the children.
“We want to go home.”
“I can help!” shouts Miss A.



“Mayor, I am standing at the back exit door.
I can lead everyone to the exit,” calls Miss A.
“Miss A, we cannot see you,” say the children.
“You cannot see me, but you can always
hear me sneeze,” laughs Miss A.
“My sneezes will lead you out of the gym.
Everyone stand!
Mayor, you be the leader.
You hold hands with only one person.
Everyone else join hands.
I will sneeze *a-choo* again and again
without stopping,” explains Miss A.
“Just follow my sneezes!”



Miss A starts to sneeze *a-choo*.

"We can hear you," laugh the children.

"It's fun to follow your *a-choos*."

Then suddenly the children get confused.

"Miss A, what are you doing?" they shout.

"We hear an *a-choo* in one place.

Then we hear an *a-choo* in another place.

How can you be sneezing *a-choo* every place?"

"I am only sneezing *a-choo* in one place,"
says Miss A.

"The other *a-choos* you hear are the antique clock
sneezing seven o'clock.

Stay where you are until the clock stops sneezing."



Everyone waits.

The antique clock sneezes seven times and then stops.

Then Miss A sneezes and sneezes and sneezes.

She leads the mayor and the children to the exit.

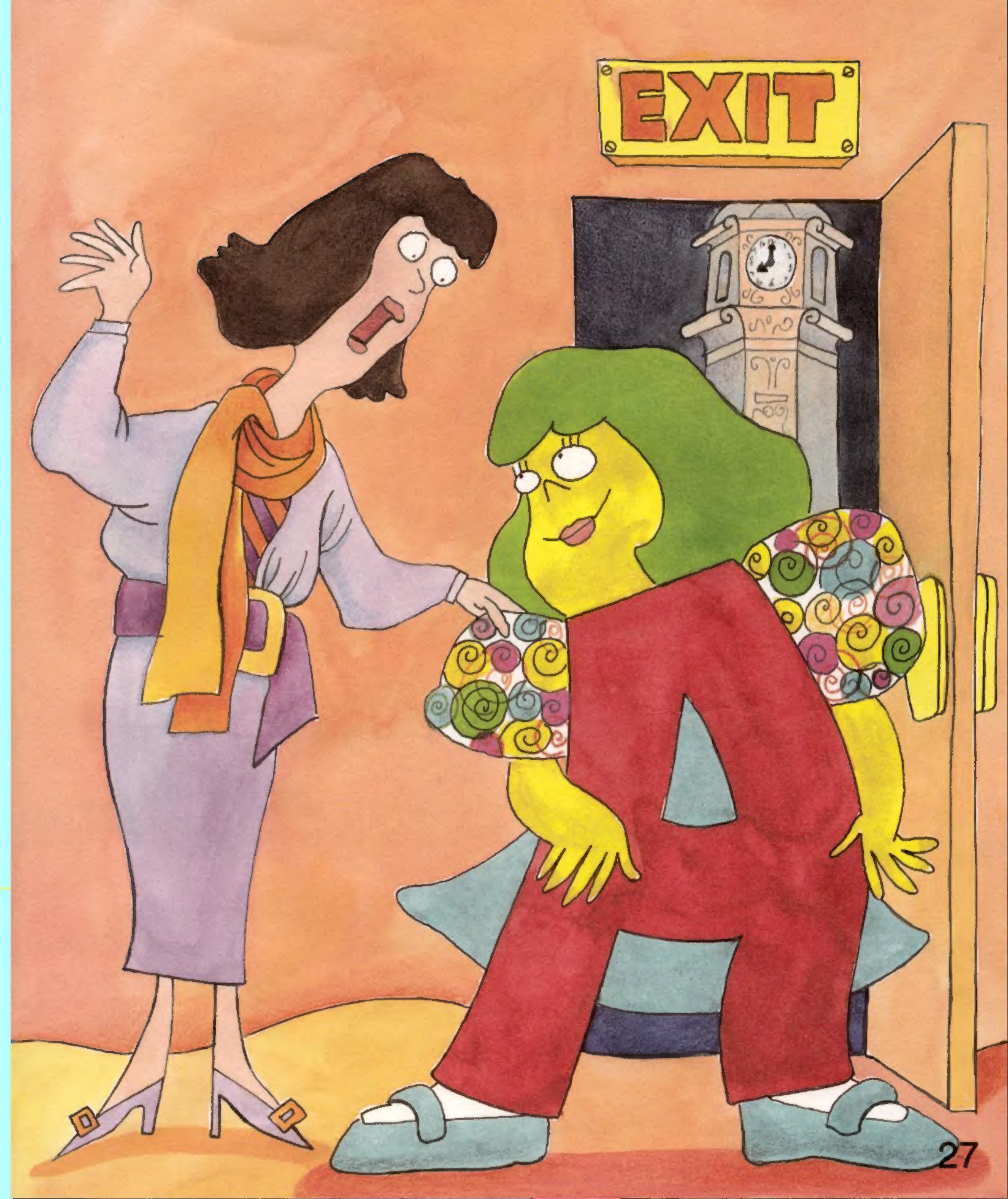
Suddenly the gym is lighted again.

"Miss A," says the mayor, "you acted quickly and helped the children."

"I am happy I could help," says Miss A.

"Now before I go home, I must talk to the clock about the confusion it is causing."

"Let me know what happens," says the mayor.



The next morning Miss A talks to the mayor.
“The clock wants to keep sneezing,” says Miss A.
“I promised to find a sneezing sound that is almost the same as *a-choo*.”
“What about sneezing *tweet-tweet* or *meow-meow*?”
ask the birds and the cats.
“Those are not good sneezing sounds,”
explains Miss A.
Then Miss A hears the sound of the morning train.
She smiles.
“Now I know what sound the antique clock can sneeze,” says Miss A.
“Mayor, meet me at the antique clock at two o’clock.
The clock will sneeze a new sound.”



At two o'clock, the clock is ready to sneeze
its new sound.

"Choo! Choo!" sneezes the clock.

"I got the idea when I heard the train go choooo
choooo," says Miss A.

"I knew the clock and I could share the a-choo sound.
I will sneeze a and the clock will sneeze choo.

And there will be no more confusion," smiles Miss A.

